

# EQUALIZING X DISTORT

Volume 11, Issue 04

September 2011



Photo by Andy Stammers

*Urban Blight have been around for a few years in various line-ups and incarnations. They have the DYS / SSD Boston sound down. Urban Blight just retruned from Europe when we did this interview so we talked about that, the new ep and looked for meaning in their songs.*

**Introduce yourselves and tell us how you contribute to the URBAN BLIGHT sound?**

Mike (M): My name is Michael and I am the vocalist.

Warren (W): I'm Warren and I play guitar.

**And you are a recent edition.**

W: Yeah. As of Tuesday.

**But you got to go to Europe with them.**

W: Indeed I did.

**Who is missing in the line up?**

M: We are missing Chris tonight. He plays bass. And Jason on drums.

**And they have a good reason for why they are not here.**

M: Because up until Warren joined the band I was the only member who lived in Toronto. Jason lives in London, Ontario. Chris lives in Welland. And before Warren, Derek lived in Niagara Falls. But Derek is no longer in the band. He still lives in Niagara Falls. It has always been a real journey to get together and practice. I told them since they came down on Tuesday don't even worry about coming back

on Sunday.

**Yeah and that was pretty crazy for them to make it down on a Tuesday night. This might create some obstacles to practicing. How do you practice?**

M: I am kind of a lazy person and before Warren joined the band I had to leave from work early, go to Union Station, get on a GO train, wait at the Meadowvale Station, get picked up, practice, get taken back to the Meadowvale Station then take a bus back to Toronto and take a bus home. I would leave my work at 5:00pm we would practice for about an hour and then I would get home around 11:00pm.

**That's crazy. That's a big commute.**

W: Now he has me to give him rides to practice.

M: Warren got in the band because he gives me rides to practice.

**I'm sure that's not the only reason.**

M: But there was a time period where the band was fairly inactive.

**Yeah because I have pestered you many times to try and come on the radio to do an URBAN BLIGHT session and you were like "there is nothing going on".**

M: Some of it had to do with just not having a stable line up. Even when we did have a line up it was a lot of work to try and do a practice in the middle of winter. No one wants to practice. At least those guys get to drive. They

probably have farther to come but they get in their cars and come. In the winter I don't want to be getting on trains and buses and subway cars to practice for an hour.

**But everyone makes the effort it seems.**

M: The good thing is that no one has it easy. Everyone has to make it work. You can't really put down one member because everyone has to put in the effort.

**So is this line up pretty stable?**

M: What do you think Warren?

W: Yeah I'd say it is.

**It is an amazing line up. All of you are incredible and you all have lineage to different punk bands. Maybe I could ask you to go through what bands you have been in because I think it is important. Some of you are in active bands to this day, but a lot of you have participated in bands that don't exist anymore. Maybe you could start Warren?**

W: I still play in MOLESTED YOUTH and we were on CIUT back in the old location about two years ago.

M: September of two years ago.

W: And I was also in BORED STIFF who are now defunct.

**I loved BORED STIFF.**

W: I'm glad you did man. That makes it all worth it for me.

**I love both bands.**



Photo by Andy Stammers

W: Thank you.

**Beav, you have a laundry list.**

M: Yeah. My first experience recording with CIUT, I moved to Toronto in '98 and I tried for years to get something going and the first band that ever did anything was SHIPWRECK. We released a demo and we recorded it at the old Studio 3 when Ben Edgar was doing all the sound. His roommate Matt was the vocalist in the band. One afternoon in 2001 we came in on a weekday afternoon and recorded a demo.

**When did SHIPWRECK fold?**

M: Our drummer at the time moved to Montreal so we didn't have a drummer and that is always the thing in Toronto especially then. Even so now. There is a finite amount of people who drum so if you know them you hold onto them and when they leave the band breaks up. And then the band reincarnated six months later. We found the only drummer in town, Jonah. We convinced him to help us out and we became the CHOICE. We did that for maybe a year or a year and a half and then it kind of faded away.

**Again, Jonah has a busy schedule.**

M: This was even before Jonah was extremely busy. We had recorded for a 12" ep that we were going to put out.

**Did it ever come out?**

M: Nope. We recorded everything except for vocals. This was the fall of 2003. Everything was done except for vocals. Ben Edgar recorded it. This time he was in the band. We recruited him on guitar.

**He was a STRAIN fan.**

M: There is a few STRAIN fans in that band. I think quite a few of us own STRAIN records. So we recorded everything but the vocals didn't get done. It was something Ben had recorded at home on a computer and Ben is into computers. He has a million computers. Over the years you take apart this computer and put together that one and somehow it gets lost in time. The only thing that made it from that band was I had a roommate named

Victor who was from South Korea. There was a show, I think it was our second show and he set up a tape recorder behind the stage before we went on and that was the only lasting sound bites of the band. And then two years ago, Matt the vocalist for his birthday, Jonah re-recorded everything himself based on the live set. He did the drums, the guitars, the bass and gave that to Matt for a birthday gift. He said "Alright, you can record vocals now." It is now two years later and he has done about half of them. There are ten songs. He might have done about five of them. It seems like it is getting closer to getting done.

**So there might be a release.**

M: The plan was to put it out in 2010 so maybe 2011 and if not we will revisit it in ten years. We'll see then.

**You have also played guitar and bass in different bands.**

M: I was in this band called HANDS DOWN.

**I dug that session. Chris was in the band wasn't he?**

M: Chris Laxton not Chris from URBAN BLIGHT. Chris was the singer in that band but in the original line up for URBAN BLIGHT he played guitar. Chris O'Toole is the bass player for URBAN BLIGHT right now and he was in

# EQUALIZING DISTORT

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 04

EQUALIZING-X-DISTORT MONTHLY is an extension of the weekly radio show heard on CIUT 89.5 FM every Sunday nights from 10:00pm 'til midnight (Participants: Rob Ferraz, D'Arcy Rix-Hayes, Stephe Perry, and Ed Pyves).

The show dedicates itself to the underground hardcore punk scene. There is a particular emphasis on international releases in the developing straight edge, garage, Killed By Death, power violence and crust scenes which means we play material like XFilesX, Women in Prison, Authorities, Wadge, and Unlearn.

There is a weekly demo feature (paying homage to the cassette format), weekly event listings, and a monthly top 10 retrospective look at new releases.

Equalizing-X-Distort  
CIUT 89.5 FM  
Sundays 10:00 pm - midnight  
21 Foundry Avenue, Unit 5  
Toronto, ON  
M6H 4K7  
Canada

Request Line: (416) 946-7000  
e-mail: [equalizingxdistort@ciut.fm](mailto:equalizingxdistort@ciut.fm)  
Website: <http://equalizingxdistort.blogspot.com/>



**DISTORT**

## CIUT 89.5 FM - "Equalizing Distort" Top 10 Hardcore Releases for April 2011

Band	Title	Format	Label
1. RATZ	"Looking for a Fight"	ep	Kink/That Lux Good
2. SOCIAL UNREST	"Songs for Sinners"	ep	Dr. Strange
3. AMSTERDAMNED		ep	Gummopunx
4. V/A	"Buffalo Brutality"	ep	Warm Bath
5. RIDE AT DAWN	"Chrome Pillars"	ep	Schizophrenic
6. TANTRUM	"L'Azione Stupida Che None Mai Finita"	dbl ep	Narm Discos
7. H100s	"Recorded Live 1995 Cleveland"	LP	SYG Records
8. SHOCK VALUE	"Yellow Peril"	ep	No Patience
9. BROKEN NECK	"Third World Media"	ep	Art Fraud
10. BLOODCLOT FAGGOTS	"Big in Adelaide"	ep	No Patience

Equalizing Distort can be heard every Sunday night on CIUT 89.5 FM at 10:00 pm. The top 10 countdown can be heard in its entirety, complete with previews of the picks and analysis on the previous month in hardcore, on the last Sunday of the month.

KEEP IT UP who did a Studio 3 session. He was the vocalist for KEEP IT UP.

**He has a monster bass sound. It is just menacing sounding. It reminds me of that Boston sound. Anyway, you also played in DANGERLOVES?**

M: Yeah. When I was in that band I just played bass, but when we did the Studio 3 session I was playing second guitar.

**Is there any bands we missed in between?**

M: I was in BAD CHOICE. I am trying to think if there is anything in between. I don't think so.

**That is a crazy amount of bands. It is awesome though. And Jason your drummer also played in a band.**

M: THE KILL DECIBEL, but this is the first band that he was ever a drummer in.

**He sounds amazing as a drummer.**

M: When he started off it was one of those things where you needed a drummer and he was learning how to drum and he was very capable of doing it. Now you listen to his drumming and it is no longer that he is capable of doing it but he is good at doing it.

**Yeah he is totally amazing. And how long ago did Chris start playing bass?**

M: I think Chris is one of those people who has played every instrument for a long time. When we go to band practice he'll fool around on the drum kit.

**What was the original line up for URBAN BLIGHT? It was a very different line up.**

M: I was on vocals. Jason was on drums. Jason was the original drummer. Chris Laxton was on guitar, and Andrew was on bass.

**How did the band's line up evolve?**

M: Basically you know how when bands start and there is a real rush to it and it is something new and people hear it and it is great and you want to play shows and you build a lot of steam and then things slow down. Andrew was playing bass in the CANCER BATS and they were getting a little busy and he was doing more things with them and ended up leaving



Photo by Hubert

that band because it was like being in a full time band. That wasn't something he was interested in.

**We were talking about shows. Do you remember what your first show was?**

M: The first show would have been in December 2003. HANDS DOWN was playing with three out of town bands at the Q Bar and within a week before the show all three bands cancelled. So we had the Q Bar booked and we had one band and we didn't have anything going on so we asked a few local bands to play and then at a HANDS DOWN practice a day or two before the show I mentioned that I always wanted to do a band where I sing. I don't really have any of the songs written. I had been writing stuff but there was nothing really ready to go. Let's learn this AGNOSTIC FRONT cover.

**What was the cover you did?**

M: I think we did "Last Warning". At the end of our set I would do this one song and somewhat that is the first URBAN BLIGHT show. I think there was even a version of the flyer with our name on it.

**Okay so you actually had the idea for a**

**name of the band at that point.**

M: Yeah, URBAN BLIGHT was the name I had kicking around for the band throughout University because I went to school for Urban Planning. I always thought that it sounded like a good punk band name.

**So where does the name URBAN BLIGHT come from?**

M: Basically it is just a term from Urban Studies used to describe unappealing parts in an urban landscape.

**It sounds like a punk application of Urban Studies. The unwanted of urban environments. It is considered the thing you don't want to see.**

M: Yeah. The plague on the urban landscape.

**You do a song called "Blight Makes Right". I have always considered it a theme song for the band. Even though you have a song called "Urban Blight" which might be more of a theme song "Blight Makes Right". What is the song about?**

M: Generally I try and take the band seriously but sometimes I do it too seriously that I need to take a jab at myself. "Blight Makes Right" is a take off on NEGATIVE FX's "Might

**FRIDAY DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>**  
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Makes Right". I thought it sounded funny and the concept about the song is about my superiority and how when I get into arguments I am always right. It was a way of making the song not seem so serious to take a jab at myself.

**I want to ask who would be your favourite urban theorist?**

M: I don't really have one.

**Jane Jacobs.**

M: That is just too pedestrian.

The reason why I ask is because I was an Urban Studies major as well and I have one and as I was going through school I started going through the library and finding anarchist theorists. Murray Bookchin had some great theories on anarchist theories applied to urban studies. There was others but I also was thinking about Jane Jacobs and how she described her theory of diversity which goes a long way to explaining a place like Kensington Market in which she is really trying to capture the recipe for making a city vibrant. I was just wondering if you liked her stuff.

M: When I was taking Urban Planning we didn't study a lot of people's theories. We did a lot more of on the job training kind of stuff. What I was more interested in school was always the historical preservation side because I have always been a history fanatic. I am a fan of the way things look and to see the progression of the styles of architecture where it used to be based on design to where it is now where things are sterile and it is more based on what is cheapest.

**Is there things that have been taken down that you have been pissed off about? This city seems to be turning stuff over like mad now. It seems like there is a race to build a condo on every corner with little regard for what has existed before.**

M: I can't really think of anything off the top of my head, but I can think of many times that I have been angry when something has been

Photo by Andy Stammers



torn down.

I live in an area that is an industrial area that is being converted into residential and there was a smokestack there. I loved the smokestack. You could see it from everywhere. I wasn't particularly attached to the smokestack until they started tearing it down and then I got pissed off. It was a landmark in the area. I could figure out where I was going. I knew where I lived because of that smokestack. I was upset when they tore it down. And I didn't feel that there was a good reason for it. Have you ever thought of working for the historical board?

M: At one point I had a job where I was an office manager for a non-profit group. The focus of this group was to preserve buildings in Toronto's east side. Kind of the area where Toronto first formed. I just didn't enjoy my job. I was an office manager for a non-profit group. I was the only employee. I spent all day in an office by myself doing a lot more fundraising, calling people trying to ask them to donate money. It just wasn't an enjoyable job.

**That is not doing the work. That is just trying to keep the doors open.**

M: Then they ran out of money I lost my job and before that I worked for the City of Burlington in the clerks department. They were building a database on all their historical buildings. They had all this raw data from their historical society and they hired a company to build them the software that they could import all the data and then they hired me to import it all. I spent two months behind a computer inputting all this stuff. So I never really got a chance to get my hands dirty.

**That is shitty. If you were to give an urban tour of Toronto what places would you recommend for travelling punks to see? And why? From a historical perspective. There are a lot of amazing things that have neat resonances in the city. Both on the east and the west end.**

M: I know general areas where things were like a club here or a club there, but something that I have always wanted to do but am a little lazy is I want to do a zine article where I do a then and now where I look at where spaces

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 9TH**



with guests:  
**URBAN BLIGHT**  
**HAZARDOUS WASTE**  
**MOLESTED YOUTH**  
**BAD CHOICE (first show!)**

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**6PM TEN DOLLARS**



Photo by Ivy Lovell

were once clubs and I find photos.'

**I found a thing on the TO THE LIONS blog about Classic Studios. I just drove by there, it is all torn down. It's shitty. Levelled.**

M: But to look at in 1987 YOUTH OF TODAY played here and now there is a Blockbuster or a pool hall.

**Yeah like the Annex Billiards used to be Ildiko's.**

M: Just find pictures from those shows and get current pictures and have a write up of what happened there.

**That would be a great idea. I tried to do it for Kensington Market. I will show it to you sometime. Tell us about the song "Cutback"?**

M: It is a song I wrote about urban finances and how it seems that we have all these different governments that come in and they feel like we need to cut from this and we need to cut from that and save money here, but there comes a point where you can't really cut anymore. You are left with nothing.

**It sounds like the fiscal fixation that conservative governments have.**

M: Yeah.

**Is it about a government in particular, because I don't think it was about the Miller government?**

M: It is something that you could tell was building up in the psyche of people. You hear critics on the news or you hear other politicians on the news saying the TTC is bloated and you need to cut this or that.

**In the last two years of Miller's term I understand the right wing of council had congealed to basically get on the radio as much as possible and pound that same message home and eventually Ford sort of rose to the top. Case Oates is one of those guys that just drove me nuts. And then this whole line of the gravy train. And then two weeks later before the turnover to Ford we get the audit and there is a \$750,000 surplus. There was no gravy train. It seems to me like a false claim. It is part of the conservative agenda.**

M: I think with the lyrics for that song there was an idea when there was that one night where the TTC went on strike and you heard

the negative outcry where people were talking about privatizing it. It first kind of started there and then you think of all the attempts to cut from here and cut from there.

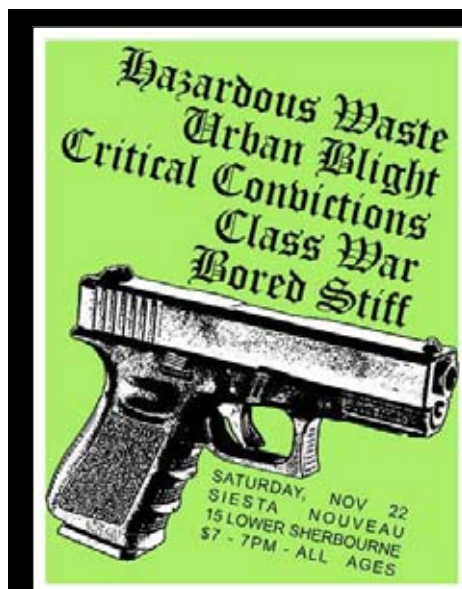
**There is a lack of vision. No attempt at building. Just the idea of getting rid of things. Or selling them off to the private sector which usually has more malicious intent. These things go to their friends.**

M: With the private sector their job is to make as much money as possible.

**And largely contracts go to people who have donated really well to their campaign. So it is a lot of favouritism and payback. Let me ask you what your thoughts are on Rob Ford?**

M: He came into office and the first thing he did was say he was going to cancel transit city, which whether you agree or disagree it is something that already has how many millions of dollars sunk into it and they have contracts tendered for two billion dollars so when you cancel transit city and you cancel the contracts you know how much money is going to be wasted. As we were discussing earlier before the show you think back to when the Harris government came in and the city was starting construction on the Sheppard subway line and the Eglinton subway line and the first thing Harris did was cut funding and fill in all the holes. We have a government that wants to abandon any rail at grade and go underground and just ten years ago we had started underground. A new government had filled it in. We wasted money there. We are wasting more money now. It is not that I have a preference to light rail at grade or underground subways but at some point you have to commit and keep moving forward instead of changing plans every ten years and wasting even more money because it just doesn't get us anywhere.

**The provincial representative for the cities said there is no more new money, so whatever money is spent in switching is**





just going to be lost money. The people who suffer are the people who need to use it. And Rob Ford seems to be a guy who drives around in a car. He doesn't take the transit. He doesn't know anything about transit.

M: He doesn't want transit. He doesn't seem to be too big on cyclists.

I think there is something else nefarious behind this. He is just trying to waste all the money so nothing gets done regarding public transit. He would never admit to something like that but I think he is just ruining it for the rest of us who rely on this system. I think almost everyone I know relies on it.

M: I constantly hear from people about how bad the TTC is, but in order for it to improve there has to be some sort of investment.

Every world class city has a transit system that works. Ours kind of barely does.

M: You think that the Eglinton line where you are connecting the downtown core with the airport would be something easy. First we had the subway line cancelled and now with this LRT that was supposed to go there and now the talk of it being cancelled you just wonder is it ever going to happen?

I think it would be great to put one up on Steeles too because that could become the next link for the GTA. Loads of people live in 905. Then they could connect with other subways.

M: You would have to imagine by 2015 with the Pan Am games in Toronto that they would have something in place to connect to the airport but who knows?

It doesn't seem like it is going to be. That was my next question. How do you think Rob Ford is going to impact this city?

M: I am not really sure yet. In one sense he is the mayor and is one vote like everybody else. If you look at voting patterns he was just a councilor. It seemed a lot of the votes were 38 to 2. But we have a new council. We don't know how much he is going to get done

because there is a lot of returning people. We have to wait and see. I'm sure it is going to be like Mel Lastman. There is going to be some outrageous sound bites, some good photo ops. Lots of talk about his football team.

M: Yeah, possibly.

The football team that he bought. Have you heard about that? I will tell you about it later. So there is a song called "Your Abuse" that appears on the "Total War" ep that just came out. I was reading the lyrics and it sounds a bit personal. Is there a story behind this song?

M: No. It is not directed at anyone. I guess it is just with the way things are it is 2010 and with the internet it is a lot easier to say whatever you want about whoever. The song is about if anyone wants to say anything about us or doesn't like us it doesn't matter. We're not going to take it.

The way you are describing it reminds me of that SHIPWRECK song "Message Bored".

M: Possibly. I haven't listened to SHIPWRECK in a while and I wasn't the vocalist in the band.

True enough. I don't know if you remember it but bored was spelled another way.

M: Yeah and I think that was Matt being tired of reading crap on message boards.

What about the song "Leech"? Is that about anyone in particular?

M: No. I am sure you could apply it to someone but it is more just....

We all know leeches.

M: Yeah. You can see within the last five years or so that punk and certain aspects of punk become something that people find marketable and profitable. There are more people who were never really involved in that. People who think they can manage bands or release their records or get on this label, as long as there is a chance for me to get my hands on a piece of the pie.

Without doing any work for it.

M: I don't have problems with bands making



money or playing this or doing that, but if someone is going to be making money off of it I would like it to be someone who is involved or who has put in the hard work. Not someone who comes along when something gets to the point where they can put in little effort and get a lot of return as opposed to people who sweated it out and worked hard and then someone just comes along and steps in and takes all the credit and takes off.

On Tuesday you guys did a cover of UPRIGHT CITIZENS, a band I haven't heard from since the mid 80's. I thought it was awesome to hear them. I had forgotten what they sounded like. I have a record of theirs and they were an incredible band from Germany. Why did you pick them to do a cover of?

M: I am somewhat of a nerd and I like bands from all over and when we were going on tour I had this idea that we were going to play all these countries. How great would it be to learn a cover from a band from each country. We didn't take it that far, but that was the song that

**Toronto's Burning**  
Schizophrenic Records  
Record Release Show

**URBAN  
BLIGHT**

**HAZARDOUS  
WASTE**

**PICKED ON**



I felt was a really great song and it is a style that I want to go for and I thought what better thing to do when we are playing in Germany let's cover this great old German punk band and hopefully watch these German punks go insane.

**Did you get that kind of reaction?**

M: Not quite as much. I think probably the best reaction we got was from people like me. Music nerds who weren't German who just thought the song was great. In Copenhagen we had quite a few people who seemed really into it. We played in Hamburg with a band from Spain and a few of those guys were into it. It didn't seem like the Germans were into it.

**It is good to have your own scene recognized by a touring band. I am sure people appreciated it even though they didn't participate like the way you hoped. How long ago did you go on tour?**

M: We left August 29<sup>th</sup> and got back on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. That is three and a half weeks.

**Warren, how did you get recruited? How much notice did you have?**

W: I had a lot more notice than the replacement drummer for the tour.

**Which is what?**

W: The drummer had one day.

**And how much did you have?**

W: A couple of months. I was told well in advance.

M: Basically it was Warren's birthday. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May Chris and Derek came to me and said I am not really sure if I can do this tour at all. Chris ended up being able to do it. And by the time we found out that Derek couldn't do it I think it would have been June or something. It was around then that we got Warren in.

**That is good notice. Tell us about where your tour starts off?**

W: London.

M: We got there two days before tour started which is nice because none of these guys had ever been there before. I had been there a year



previously so I got the chance to show them around for a couple of days. You know, go record shopping...

W: It was nice to have those two days.

M: See the sights. Get in the right time zone.

**Yeah, it takes a while to get used to that.**

M: I find it really easy when I am going over there. It takes me a few weeks coming back. But I have always found with any tours overseas that you fly over, you get in at 10:00 in the morning and you have left (Canada) at six at night. You don't sleep on the airplane and then eight hours later you are playing a show and you always suck so I wanted to get there at least one day early and just the way it worked with tickets we got there two days early. We had time to get acclimatized and be ready to go.

W: Two days to buy Harringtons.

M: You can't really sleep on the airplane or you can't get enough sleep. So we bought clothes and we bought records and ate a lot of Indian food.

Curry and chips. So why did you tour

Europe? It is like the holy grail really.

**Everyone dreams of touring Europe**

M: I have been very fortunate that I have been able to do it twice before. I did it once with FUCKED UP when I was filling in for them and I roadied for CAREER SUICIDE one time. It is such a good time to go there. It is kind of like your punk rock vacation. You go and you get shown around all these different cities by these other punks and you buy their records and eat their food.

**The hospitality is incredible.**

M: It is a lot different then North America. People are very friendly and they have dinner ready for you and somewhere for you to sleep and breakfast planned.

**They have thought of everything.**

M: I never thought it was something we could get to do with URBAN BLIGHT, but when we did the "More Reality" 12" we got a really good response to the record and people seemed interested so I contacted a friend in England who does *Static Shock Records* and I said "I would love to tour the UK. I think it would be amazing. Do you think you could put out a record for us? We could come over for two weeks we could hit up every record store in the country and play a few shows." He was like "yeah, no problem. I would love to do a record." Then someone from Germany, Flo contacted me. He does this thing called Trapdoor Tourz, which is like a booking agency. He booked BRUTAL KNIGHTS tours. He contacted us and said "I hear you are going to England. If you are going to go to England, you might as well come over here." So I was like "Okay." I first contacted my friend Ellis from England and this was the summer of 2009 so I just figured it would be something to get the ball rolling early and it would be an easy little trip. As I said, try and hit up every little record store in England and have a good time and it snowballed into a more legit tour where we went to the mainland and played a lot of shows.







Photo by Hubert

### So did you hit up every record store?

M: No, unfortunately. You have this idea in your head that you are going to go non-stop record shopping and then you run out of time. You get up at 8:00 in the morning and you drive to the next city and you get to the venue and you have dinner and then you play the show and you go to sleep. You get up in the morning and the record shop doesn't open until 1:00pm and you are leaving at 11:00am. So it was good to get to London a little early. We could hit up some shops there.

### Did you pick up anything interesting?

M: We played in Berlin and this guy came up to us after the show and he is like, "Do you like rare records?" I was like "Yes." "I have a distro of rare records, why don't you come over to my house", so me and Rick end up going over to his house. He had mostly LPs which by that point in the tour we didn't have any more room to carry anything else like that so I ended up getting this single by a German band from Hamburg called the BUTTOCKS which is from 1979 so that was cool. I actually didn't end up buying a lot of records on tour

mostly for space restrictions. We ended up getting a lot of current records.

W: Every show has so many records.

### What about you Warren, what was your prize? Did you pick up anything?

W: Nothing crazy.

### What about new band wise?

W: I got the GLAM 7" when I was over there. A new Spanish hardcore band. It is great. I highly recommend it. One of my favourites that came out this year.

### You would never have found it if you didn't go over.

M: I guess the one thing about not having time to go to record stores, the one thing I forgot to mention is that in Berlin we spent two nights sleeping on the floor of a record store.

### Okay so it was in Germany. So why did you sleep in this record store because there is a story behind this?

M: The guy who put on the show in Berlin had a record store called *Static Shock Records*. Our 7" came out on a label called *Static Shock*. Anyways that is just coincidence.

It wasn't the same.

M: No. Totally different. We ended up having a day off because we couldn't get a show in Stockholm. They were having venue problems so we ended up going straight from Copenhagen to Berlin. Got there at 3:00 in the afternoon and got in touch with the promoter. He was like come meet me at my record shop. He was like "You guys will be staying here." There was some floor space in the back room. There was a kitchen and a bathroom and a little hallway.

### It's a dream come true.

M: So basically he said "Here are the keys to my store. Take a look. If there is anything you want write it down on that sheet. Put the money in this box. I'll see you in the morning."

### Trusting.

M: Very trusting. He said he heard good stuff about us and that we were trustworthy people.

W: He definitely wound up being one of the coolest people we met on tour.

### Did you also tell me that the squat that you were playing at had rats?

M: Oh yeah. It was a better alternative. Apparently they were more cat size then rat size.

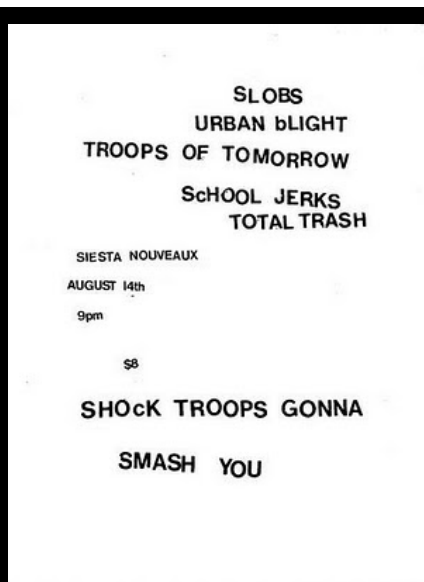
### Wow. Well feed.

M: So this was a pretty old squat in Berlin that was only half there due to some bombs falling during World War II.

### "Bombs of Peace".

M: Nothing had ever been done with it and I think they said in the 90's that the punks kind of took over this building and had squatted it since then. There seemed to be a really big room on the main level with a big huge stage. We didn't play there. It was more like a small basement which was better for us. It was absolutely packed in there and it was just the small little basement part of this building and it was just rammed full of these enthusiastic show goers. At one point we went out and there was fireworks going off across the street at night. Like a huge firework selection.

W: For ten minutes.





### Unrelated.

M: Unrelated. You could hear techno music coming out of someone's apartment building. And there was fireworks going off for ten or fifteen minutes.

W: And it was a big fireworks display. Like lots of fireworks.

### Was there a local celebration or was it unrelated?

M: They might have been celebrating the rain which happened every single day when we were on the mainland. We went to England, no rain. Sunny. Beautiful everyday. The second we step on the mainland and it rained every single day.

### It is like they swapped weather.

M: We were a little tired of it.

### Okay, you said you didn't get to play a show in Stockholm, but you did get to play in Sweden.

M: Yeah, we played in Malmo.

### I understand you played two shows that day.

M: Yeah.

### In two countries.

M: Yes

### How could you do that?

M: Well basically what happened was we had played this weird kind of rural show in Denmark. It was in this giant warehouse in this small rural area in Denmark and they have a giant stage built from these blocks. It is like a checker pattern where one box is completely clear and the other one is wooden. There is a huge sound system with all kinds of lights and we are in what could possibly be an airplane hanger. Maybe about twenty people show up. These very Hard Goth / Industrial looking people in very long trench coats.

### So it didn't go over very well.

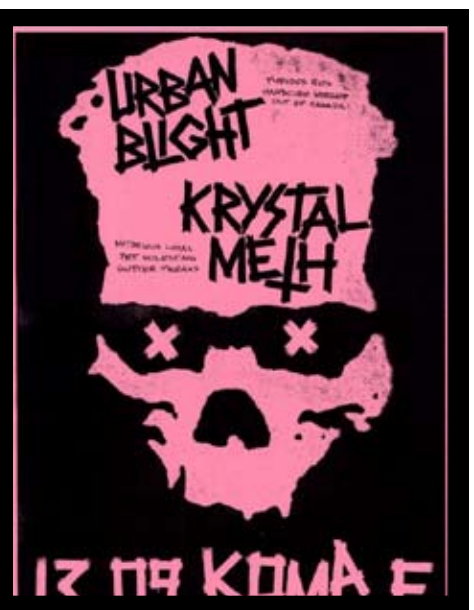
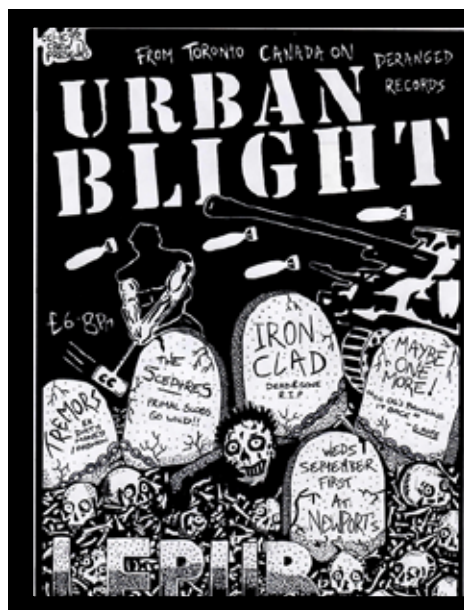
M: No. So the bands watched each other and the people kind of showed up hung out smoking, but luckily it was put on by people who have a squat that is government funded so at the end of the night there was money for everyone.



It wasn't necessarily the best show to play. That band HJERTSTOP wound up playing the show and they were going "Sorry we couldn't end up getting you a show. Because of the other shows going on this was the only gig we could get. We are doing one tomorrow night. But you guys are playing Malmo tomorrow so if you want Malmo and Copenhagen are about 45 minutes apart connected by a bridge. If you can leave your Malmo show by 10:30pm come straight to Denmark and play the show going on with NIGHT FEVER." So we go "okay". So we go to Malmo the next day and get to the show and we are trying to talk to the guy and we were like "apparently someone talked to you and we are going to play Denmark tonight." He was like "No one talked to me." We were all like "what is going on here?" he was like "You guys are going to be headlining." We were like "We were going to leave early to play this other show." Then we found out it was his birthday party and that it was a free show.

### So how did you work this out?

M: Basically this was a show we got at the last minute because we were having problems getting shows in Sweden. We didn't know it was a free show and it was his birthday. At one point we were contemplating that we should just go to Denmark. This guy is having us for the show, we should play. I guess the people in Denmark had talked to somebody else who wasn't involved in the show about us going over there. So anyways, we find out it is a free show so we are like maybe we should go to the other show so we can at least make some money that night. The dude was a skinhead and all his buddies were skinheads and the only people who weren't skinheads had crazy face tattoos so we played the show and people were super into us and we sold a lot of merch and the guy who's birthday it was came over and gave us 5,000 Swedish kronas out of his own pocket which was like the equivalent of 50 Euros and thanked us for coming. He kept on patting me on the back and telling me "Leech, I really like that song. I hadn't heard you guys until last week when someone asked to get you on the show. But the lyrics, they really speak to me. I really like you guys." We were like "Oh amazing." By the time we finish playing it is quarter after eleven and we are kind of freaking out and we high tail it. We load everything up. We had this insane driver who no matter where we were drove 160 miles an hour. Even if we are in the city. So it was no problems with him. But the squat we are playing is in a pedestrian only street and we are trying to find it. I get out of the van and I am running because I am worried we are going to miss the chance to play our second show and we just did all this for nothing when we could have been hanging out at this dudes birthday party in Sweden. Eventually I find it and then I track down the van running down the street. Shining the flashlight at them telling them to stop. We load in and everything was good. So we got to play Sweden and Denmark in one night.



### With a lot of insanity in between.

M: With a lot of freaking out in Sweden trying to figure out when we are going to go on because the band before us took forever to set up and then played forever. The guy who's birthday it was kept coming over patting me on the back going "You are stressed. Don't worry. It is going to be okay. Don't be stressed."

W: Didn't he give you a shoulder massage as well?

M: Yeah. He was trying to be nice and reassuring. He was an excellent dude and an amazing guy. Touring Europe you meet so many amazing people.

### A vast of characters. Warren, you liked the Rural Distortion Fest. What the hell is that?

W: It was in a mountain. Where was that?

M: It was just north of the southern mountains in France kind of in the middle of nowhere. We basically got put on this fest. We were like "Oh cool, we are playing this fest in France. It should be good." We had directions and the directions expressly said "Here is the Postal Code for this city. Make sure you use this postal code because there is another city two hours south of here. So make sure you use this postal code." So we used it and we wound up at the city two hours south of there. Luckily Zach the drummer was fairly good with his French. He made nice with the people in this village, population probably 30. There was one commercial spot which was a little restaurant. He went in and made real nice with the lady working there and eventually they called some people and we sorted it out. But then the other directions, we had the correct postal codes for the city and the directions now said turn left at the black rock. So we got to the city and once again we were lost. We had no idea where we were going. Chris, our bass player, kept making jokes about how it was going to be worth it. We were going to show up to this fest and CRASS would be playing and they would be so honoured to be sharing the stage with us.



Photo by Ivy Lovell

Stupid stuff like that. Once again it took Zach's French language skills. He befriended two old dudes who were like "we think we know what you are talking about, just follow us." We end up at a farm the guy who came out didn't look impressed at all. He was like "No, there is no crazy punk fest happening on my farm." We ended up down the street a bit.

### How did you find this place?

M: I don't know how we found it in the end.

W: We got lucky. Driving by it I think we might have seen the black rock.

M: Maybe yeah. But we get there and there is all these vintage 70's and 80's sprinter vans from Europe just parked everywhere. I am guessing everyone from Southern middle France came to this fest.

W: And they all brought at least four dogs each. There were so many dogs at this fest running around fighting and having sex everywhere.

M: There was also kids running around everywhere fighting and drinking alcohol. These dogs were playing fetch with rocks. Or they would run up while a band was playing and start howling at the front of the stage. It

was very surreal and I think it put us out of our comfort zone.

W: I remember we were the sixth band to play out of fifteen and we went on at 10:30pm.

M: The show started at 1:00pm in the afternoon. In England every night we played in pubs and we were now in France and it was kind of cold outside and there was no bathrooms. There was a hill and a plank. Go to the end of the plank and do your thing. It was cool though because you are out of your comfort zone wondering if this is going to be good or not. Where the hell am I? I just want to go home. It is one of those tour moments and then you get on stage and you look out and there is 300 random punks and 200 random dogs and they are all going crazy. You are like "Wow, people are into this. This is cool." Basically it was a two day fest. The first day was the hardcore / d-beat night and the second night was the noise night. We were booked on the second night. So no punk bands had played until we went on.

W: I watched bits and pieces of every band that went on before us and they were all so bad it wasn't even funny. It was actually

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**URBAN BLIGHT**  
THE DEAF IS COMING TO TORONTO  
**MOTHER NIGHT**  
FROM NEW JERSEY. BACK FROM YOUR  
**ROBOT WHALES**  
MEMBERS OF GET REAL BRING BACK THE 90's

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unbearably bad. The first band that went on was an instrumental indie pop band. They didn't have vocals or anything. They were indie pop without vocals. And the band that went on before us was a noise band.

W: They had spoken word over top.

M: It was funny because they were all older dudes and we went on and we played and we covered **NEGATIVE APPROACH** and they all started singing along. Then they were like "Play **LAST RITES**", play this and play that. It was awesome. Then our set was done. We played for half an hour and people were screaming "more". In Europe everyone wants more. I found that the best thing to do was with three songs left go "This is the end of our set" and everyone goes "more" and then you have three more songs. You think it is about the length but they just want more.

W: I remember when the other bands were playing it looked like nobody was at this fest. It was desolate and people were scattered everywhere. When we go on it is already dark and I remember tuning my guitar thinking "this is going to suck ass. There is nobody here." Then I turn around and there is 300 weirdos who came out of the mountains in France to see **URBAN BLIGHT**. It is like they came out of nowhere. And they reacted. It was amazing.

M: This was another one of those shows where admission was a donation and there was a jar with a few Euro pennies. I was wondering how we were going to fill the gas tank to go to Barcelona? But at the end of the night they were like we knew you were a touring band. First ever Canadian band to play Rural Distortion fest so we set aside some money for you.

W: I was honoured.

M: You get so used to playing shows in North America you don't realize how nice and generous these people are. You think you are not going to have enough money to put gas in the tank but they always have money for you which is great.

**You were saying you got to play Barcelona and Paris. What were those shows like?**

M: As was the theme our tour was a lot of last minute cancellations. We started booking



the shows at the end of February. Basically Barcelona fell through. We got an e-mail a couple of days before Rural Distortion fest saying "Not sure really what is going on with your show here." Try and contact the promoter to find out what is going on and we were supposed to play in Milan. That show got cancelled. Then we got moved to Bologna, which was pretty crazy. So we drive straight from Bologna to Rural Distortion fest overnight. So we didn't sleep or anything or have time to check e-mail. We are at Rural Distortion fest and we had been driving a lot and sleeping in the van a lot and kind of annoyed and we didn't know what was going on with our show in Barcelona. We ended up in a totally different city then we thought we were going to be in France and we ended up a lot further north then we thought we would be so instead of being a couple of hours from Barcelona it was going to be five hours from Barcelona and then we would have had to drive from Barcelona back up to Paris so it would have been insane and we didn't know if the show was happening in Barcelona or not so we made a decision. We decided we were not going to go to Barcelona. We were a lot

further away now.

**Had you ever been to Barcelona?**

M: No.

**It is a very punk capital.**

M: When I had a chance to check my e-mail I had one from the promoter with a laundry list of reasons why not to come one of them being because of a football match. Atletico Madrid v Barcelona. He was like "everyone is going to be there. Don't bother. I did this punk show two months ago and no one came out for these touring bands. Don't bother. I am having problems finding opening bands. Don't bother." So in the end we made the right decision. Even though it would have been amazing to go to Barcelona.

W: We ended up going to Paris a day early so we had time to relax.

M: We also ended up in the French countryside. Our driver's girlfriend is French and her grandparents live in the French countryside and she was staying with them and they invited us over and made us a full meal. They got some chickens from their neighbour and they had vegetables from their backyard and made us a full meal. It was another one of these towns of 40 people. It was like "Have a shower if you



want. Let's get clean." Let's have a hot meal. Let's sit down and relax and get pampered by these nice French grandparents. It was incredible.

W: I think they were just happy to have company.

M: Once again Zach's French helped us. They loved Zach because he could speak French so we let Zach converse with them while we stuffed our mouths. We didn't get to go to Barcelona but when you are on those tours it is those days off that you always remember because it gives you time to recharge especially as a vocalist. I get to rest my throat. After that we ended up in Paris one day early. I contacted the promoter and he was like "no problem come stay at my place." This was someone who was a single dad who had twin daughters and was like "you are here a day early, come stay at my place. The daughters will sleep in my room. A couple of you guys can have their beds. There is some floor space here" and you are reminded once again just how generous these people are. This guy wound up being one of my favourite guys from tour because of his generosity and his niceness.

**You also went to Germany. You said you played five shows. Did you play in a place that was formerly part of the eastern bloc?**

M: We played in Leipzig.

**What was that show like?**

M: It was in this huge squat. The food was incredible. They made this amazing Indian food. There was a band from Croatia that was also playing who were losing their minds about how spicy it was and they couldn't handle the food. We were laughing at them going this food is amazing.

W: I remember that show being really bad.

M: Yeah, the show for us wasn't good but the food was great. We played with a band from Nepal.

**I have played this band on the show before.**

M: Yeah. RAI KO RIS.

**They have a single out.**

M: I think they have a lot of records and they have been around for a while. Actually they went up to the promoter and said should we play our half hour set or an hour and a half set. The promoter said "you could play your



half hour set tonight." Anyways a few days later we meet up with another American band called DEATH RAID and they were asking us if we have ever been to Leipzig? "They have amazing food. So much so that when we toured here last time with my old band, two guys moved back to Leipzig afterwards because the food was so good." They ended up opening up a restaurant in the same building as the squat.

**Really?**

W: I remember that guy from Bologna Italy who used to work for Pete from Hits and Misses.

M: The band was from Seattle and all those dudes knew Pete from when Singles Going Steady was in Seattle.

**That is also cool. Warren, you also took on the important role of being the party animal for the band.**

W: It was me and Zach.

**Beav was saying that the straight edge guys would go to bed and you would socialize and drink with everybody.**

W: We would try and figure out what we are doing.

**Any interesting adventures?**

W: I was going to touch back on the time that we were in Paris. These guys were actually there for it. It was the time when the guy's

elevator broke down.

M: This guy lived on the seventh floor of an apartment building and he had this little tiny elevator. It was like no more than seven people. We had six. We were like "no problem. We will just take the elevator up. It breaks down with us in it. Cramped in this tiny elevator.

**How long were you in there for?**

M: Two hours.

W: Sweating and ...

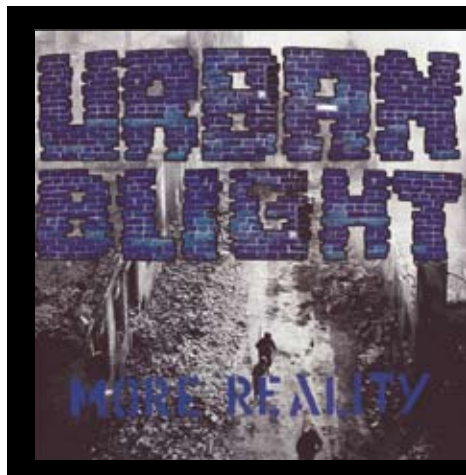
M: ...drinking beer. Urinating in the corner.

W: In a bottle to be fair.

M: I guess if the original line up of URBAN BLIGHT had toured it would have been four very tame boring straight edge dudes and people in Europe like to socialize and have a good time and some of us just like to sleep. We really lucked out having Warren and Zach. We sacrificed them to the European punks to appease their appetite to party while the rest of us found a clean quiet part of the squat to sleep in.

**In your stories you were talking about doing a NEGATIVE APPROACH cover. I wanted to ask you about your influences. NEGATIVE APPROACH seem like an influence on the band.**

M: I wouldn't say you could boil it down to one band that influences us. Any music that is good. Like American bands like NEGATIVE





APPROACH or AGNOSTIC FRONT or maybe something like DISCHARGE or even as we were talking before UPRIGHT CITIZENS. Just something that I like.

**Well everytime I listen to you I think of SSD and NEGATIVE FX. I think of the Boston scene.**

M: That is the comparison we get a lot.

**When that band was asking for a LAST RITES cover I think other people hear that too.**

M: Someone at the same show said we would be the perfect AGNOSTIC FRONT tribute band.

**I can see that and you said you started out doing a cover of "Last Warning" right. I always thought that you guys should do a cover of DYS's "City to City" because it has a city theme and it is that Boston sound. It seems to me that it would perfect with your set.**

M: I don't know if you remember this but one time you were at a CHOICE show and we actually covered that song. So I am thinking we have been there and done that.

**I think "Enough" from the demo sounds like DYS' "City to City".**

M: Yeah.

**If you had to describe the band to someone who has never heard you before how would you describe it?**

M: Loud.

**Loud totally applies to the last two releases.**

M: I have an older brother who is not really into punk music and he was trying to get me to describe music to him and I believe I said "loud, fast and unmelodic". And he said, "What there is no melody? It is unmelodic?" I was like "I guess, yeah."

**That is true, but I guess to someone who listens to pop music that doesn't make sense.**

M: That is someone who doesn't know punk music I thought that would be a decent way to get my point across.

**How about to someone who does listen to punk music?**

M: Just loud, short and to the point. When I write songs I try to make the point.

**Most songs are around a minute.**

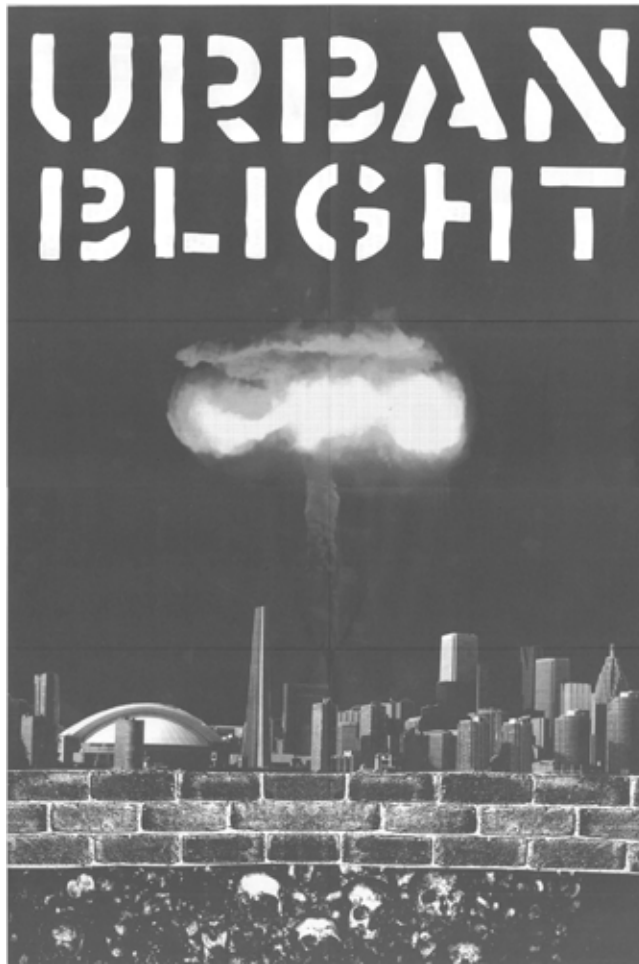
M: Yeah.

**But that also applies to a lot of punk so that doesn't really help me.**

M: Yeah. Sorry. I guess you are never going to know what we sound like.

**Okay tell me about the demo. How many songs were on it?**

M: That is a good question. The demo I believe has five songs. The way the band happened was I was writing songs in my room and we were going to go to Jason O'Young's place



one day and he was like "Come over to my house. I am going to record a hardcore version of "Summer of '69" in my basement. We were like "Okay we got nothing better to do." So as he struggles to play the drums to that while playing the music along in his head. He just keeps screwing up so I am like "Why don't we take a break and let's try and record this song "Urban Blight" that I wrote for this band I want to do?" So we recorded that song. That was on a Saturday afternoon and on a Sunday and I came by Equalizing-X-Distort and gave the CD to Jonah and he actually played it that night. So we recorded it on the Saturday and by Sunday it was on its way to Mars through the radio waves. So when we recorded the demo we recorded that song along with the five others but it didn't sound as good so I was like "We already have a recorded version of this so." Then when we recorded the 7" I don't think it sounded as good as the first original version, which I don't even know if I have the first version anywhere because we recorded it and converted it into an MP3. But the demo was five songs.

**When did you record it? How long ago? You told me it was 2004.**

M: It was around the LEFT FOR DEAD reunion. Was that 2004? I kind of remember practicing in Jason's basement a few days before we were going to record and then going to a show that was at that place in Waterdown. It was either LEFT FOR DEAD

or HAYMAKER? I think it might have been LEFT FOR DEAD and then we recorded the demo a week after that.

**Was it Jason who did the recording?**

M: Yeah Jason.

**It is an incredible sounding recording. He's got a great studio.**

M: He has an unfinished basement with a computer in the corner.

**Yeah but it sounds incredible. Everything I have heard that comes out of there sounds great.**

M: I think the best stuff he did out of there is the first two VIOLENT MINDS 7"s. It is funny though because I will go over there to practice and you'll see notes lying around from some random teen band that he recorded in his basement and you are wondering "Who the hell are these guys?" I don't think he has done much lately but for a while he was recording the most random bands in his basement.

**So the opening song is called "Breakout". It seems like an introduction to the band. Like we are breaking out of this shell kind of thing.**

M: I don't think I wrote it in that sense. The lyrics to me were more kind of when you are growing up there seems to be a set path that you

are expected to take. Like you go to school and then you get a job ....

**So breaking out of a mold of prescribed roles.**

M: If you don't want to follow that route don't do it.

**It is almost like straight edge.**

M: Yeah.

**There is a song on here called "Quit Harshing My Buzz". I thought of the original line up as being mostly straight edge. So it comes off as either a funny twist on someone being high or maybe there is an incident being related. What's the song about?**

M: It doesn't have to do with straight edge. It has more to do with negativity. You will find people saying "these bands today are so terrible or I went to this show and the show was so bad and everyone just stood there. Or no one likes this or no one likes that and I wish people did this." I don't know what you guys are into but I really like what is going on. I am having a good time. I seem to find a lot to complain about but I am liking it.

**How many demos did you make?**

M: How many did we manufacture?

**Yeah.**

M: When we were recording there are always these yard sales at Trinity-Bellwoods park. We went and after one was over we found a green garbage bag full of someone's old mixed tapes so. We had Meatloaf on side A and Tears for

Fears on side B. There was maybe forty or fifty of them and we all dubbed those ourselves because we were going to the Posi Numbers fest in the US so we had about 50. After that we went to AccuDub which has been around for quite a while. They used to do mastering. In the 80's they did all the early Toronto hardcore bands. I ended up having them do 200 and then when those sold out we ended up doing another 100. In total around 350 with 300 of them being professionally duplicated and the other 50 sound really bad and you can kind of hear the most random stuff on them.

**Even sometimes when you erase tapes there is drop ins.**

M: At the U. of T swap shop you used to be able to go and get these Chinese religions cassettes and I think Jonah and Matt bought 200 or 300 of them and whenever we were doing a project we would dub over them. We had them forever.

**Has there been any thought about releasing this?**

M: It's not really something I am into. I feel like we have gotten better at song writing and getting our sound recorded. I don't feel like there is a need for it. There is already so many records being released by so many bands the thought of an URBAN BLIGHT demo being on vinyl seems useless.

**Lots of bands do it. That recording is amazing.**

M: I don't really think there is a need for it.

**Well some of the songs have never come out before.**

M: You can pick up a copy of *Maximumrocknroll* right now and see a review for so many good records.

**I just feel like some of these songs might be lost. That's what I worry about.**

M: I don't.

**There seems to be a lot of songs about disappointment.**

M: Not disappointment. "Follow Through" is about ... there is so many avenues for people to give an opinion or say something or to put forth that they are going to do something but you find that people are more about talk than acting on what they say they are going to do. When we play live I always make all these stupid speeches and I try not to make things so serious. I intro the song by saying "this song goes out to people who say they are going to help you move and they don't help you."

**It seems like a year later an ep came out on *Deranged*. How did that come about?**

M: Gord can be a very persistent person. I wanted to take things slow, but he was very adamant about wanting to do a record for us. I had songs and he really wanted to do a record so went again back to Jason's basement. We record over an afternoon. I wasn't really happy with how the vocals turned out so I ended up re-doing them. We basically got some money from *Deranged* to record it. Some of the money went to the artwork for the 7". Andrew's tattoo artist did the artwork. The rest of the money



went to some pizza and dinner that night.

**Can you describe the artwork for us?**

M: It's got this skinhead dude in a Blue Jays jacket and he is fighting this skeleton contractor.

**And you often wear Blue Jays gear.**

M: Yep. I like a lot of sports.

**You made a reference to the Blue Jays at a show the other day. There was some significance to the day that the show was on.**

M: I believe it was the anniversary to Joe Carter's homerun.

W: Did I ever tell you that my brother found an URBAN BLIGHT t-shirt at Value Village? It is the 7" cover. It was too small for him so he gave it to me. Now it's too small for me.

**Did the ep have a name?**

M: No it was just self-titled.

**When was it recorded in relation to the demo?**

M: The demo would have been the springtime of 2004 and we recorded the 7" in February 2005. What ended up happening was FUCKED UP had this European tour planned and Damian couldn't go with them. They asked a million people to go with them and they couldn't do it but I was the one who could so I ended up as the singer for FUCKED UP that summer so I went to Europe and the first time I saw that 7" was at a record store in Germany. Someone said "I heard the singer from URBAN BLIGHT was filling in for FUCKED UP so I bought your record so I would have an idea of what you sounded like."

**That's cool.**

M: Yeah. People didn't like me.

**Really?**

M: Well I am not surprised.

**I think you are a great singer though.**

M: Yeah but if you are going to see FUGAZI and you love FUGAZI and John Brannon shows up singing for them you would be like he is a good singer but this is not what I was looking for. Not that it is that much of a gap between us but people had expectations and I didn't really fulfill them.

**You didn't carve your forehead open.**

M: Nope.

W: Did anyone from Europe recognize you from that tour?

M: I don't know but during that tour I got a lot of negative feedback from people, but actually FUCKED UP wound up playing in Serbia this summer and this Croatian girl came out to the show and said "I like the other singer a lot better." So I think there is one person who preferred me over Damian.

**Who are you comparing yourself to in the song "Not Like You"?**

M: None of these songs are generally about any person. At the time I had just graduated from university and you look at the lifestyle of the people around you with their expectations. They drive a fancy car, they have a certain job or they want to go around and have sex with women. These are the only things important to them. I didn't care about anything like that. I was more interested in watching sports and buying records. I am not like these people but it doesn't make me a loser or a slob because I don't have fancy clothes or whatever.

**On the ep there is also a song called "Slow Death". There is a band from PEI called SLOW DEATH and they did a song called "Slow Death". I often wondered if this was a cover.**

M: When was that band from?

**A long time ago. They also had an X on their hand on the cover of their tape. A skeleton hand with an X on it holding a skateboard. It is one of the most punk covers I have ever seen.**

M: Thinking back just going over songs I think from a lyrical standpoint this is one of my most favourite songs I did with URBAN BLIGHT. I have always had such a hate for cigarettes and cigarette smoke.

**Is that what it is about?**

M: Yeah. At the time when I wrote it was before they had changed the by-laws in Toronto and you could still smoke in clubs.

**I used to work in that environment. I hated it.**

M: You used to go to a show at Clinton's or something and there would be no ventilation



and you would be there for five hours and my eyes would be burning. I wear contact lenses. My clothes would stink. I just hated it so much. Luckily someone came along and changed that and then we end up in Europe this summer and we are re-introduced to it all over again. I just love going to shows, playing that song and you see people singing along and people who feel as passionate as I do about hating smoking. People talk about straight edge and militancy and choice. I am straight edge and I don't really care about what people do but when it comes to smoking cigarettes it is something I feel pretty strong about. It is something that affects me if I am around someone who smokes or just walking down the street or when I leave my office building at night there is a bar next door and they have a little alcove into our office. There is always people standing in there smoking. I feel like I can never escape cigarette smoke and I just hate it so much.

**Okay, your next release comes out three years later. What took so long between releases?**

M: It was actually four years later. Basically as I was describing before we had band members where they had other things going on or they didn't have time. It was just travelling to Jason's place. When people don't have the time to do it and then adding that big travel on top just makes it happen less and less. You feel less motivated to do it. It is the middle of winter and I could try and organize this or I could sit at home and stay warm and it just kind of became something easy to do. To not do anything. You kind of forgot about the band. I was still kind of writing songs and thinking about stuff but Andrew was getting busy with his other band. It just wasn't working. That line up of the band did all it could do.

**Did the line up change?**

M: Yep. It ended up. Andrew said he didn't have time for this anymore. He knew we wanted to keep going so we should find someone else. So I contacted Derek. I think KEEP IT UP was still around at the time. And there had been times where KEEP IT UP had played shows and URBAN BLIGHT wasn't playing, but they wanted us to play and they learned a couple of URBAN BLIGHT songs so I would sing that with them. So Derek was already kind of familiar with the band that way. I asked him to play guitar and Laxton moved over to bass, but then Laxton seemed to be less and less around. He wasn't really showing up to band practice. We had a show on the first FUCKED UP weekend, we were playing an after party and Laxton had just not shown up to band practice so I sent him an e-mail saying we were going to get Chris to come and play. He will learn the songs and we will see what happens after that. We just never heard back from him. It was like a mutual parting. So we got Chris O'Toole on bass and with Chris and Derek being in the same area they could drive with each other to band practice. That

made things easier on their end. Having the new members and sounding a lot better live gave new energy to the band. We should do something. So then I had all these songs so we started practicing and then we wouldn't practice for three months. It was starting to build up steam again and people would always ask us to play shows and I would just explain how we weren't ready to. We would play one or two shows a year. Then we started to play shows a little more and then we nailed down a date with Jonah to record us and things picked up steam. We were playing a lot more. The songs were finally all written and recorded once the record came out in May we didn't have anything else stopping us from doing things. We weren't having to record. We could just play shows and be much more active. That raised the profile of the band and people were like "Oh you are still around." It had been so long since the 7" and people were surprised that we were still a band.

**The 12" is called "More Reality". It came out on Slasher Records. Where did the name come from?**

M: I didn't really have a name for the record. It was just going to be self-titled and one of the songs on the record was "More Reality" and when Matt from *Slasher* was doing the layout he was like "More Reality" that sounds like it would be a good New York Hardcore record. He was like "Let's call the record 'More Reality'."

**How did Matt come to do the record?**

M: I have known Matt since we were in the band SHIPWRECK together. I became good friends with him and he did a record label and he was putting out lot of stuff from Toronto so we were like let's get *Slasher* to do this.

**How did Jonah come to record it?**

M: One of the best things to ever happen to Toronto hardcore was Christmas 2007. Jonah's parents got him a digital 8-track. I don't think he had much interest in recording before that, but he definitely had done a recording. Being in FUCKED UP and CAREER SUICIDE he was demoing their stuff and becoming proficient at recording. Jonah can play all instruments and he has got a great ear so we asked him to record us because he couldn't do anything other than make us sound better than we are.

**The 12" is hot sounding. It is super blown out. Was that intentional?**

M: Definitely. I think with the other stuff that Jason did I always felt it didn't quite capture the sound that I wanted. I felt it was missing a bit of a punch. Jonah knew how to get that out of us. He knew how to give the drums that



much more of a punch. He knew how to make that bass hit you that much harder.

**I live in a place that has a warehouse about 500 yards from where I live that is sealed up with heavy metal contaminants from General Electric. They used to own the land and they never cleaned it up. The opening song on "More Reality" is called "Toxic City". Explain.**

M: I always have such a hard time with lyrics. I can write songs and we can record and I still don't have lyrics.

**But you have great examples in this of the "Toxic City". You talk about the propane explosion. You talk about the fire on Queen Street. You talk about the air quality. Bob Hunter wrote a book called "Thermogeddon". He was one of the founding members of Green Peace. He talks about the air quality in Toronto. Basically if you live in Toronto you are cutting five years off your life**

M: The first idea for the song is actually a lot older than the song. It was probably in 2003 or 2004. In that summer I was pretty sick and everytime I went outside I got winded. I was riding my bike and I got a little too much air in me and I ended up throwing up outside.

**Wow. That would be a breaking point.**

M: I shouldn't be going outside and puking as I walk down Roxton Road. Then as I was writing the song I felt there could be more to this and I thought about all the things that had happened in Toronto in recent events and we actually started recording and I thought it would be nice to put a nod to some current events that had happened in Toronto.

**You do a song called "Get a Clue". It reminds me of YOUTH OF TODAY's song "Make a Change" in that it advocates for the person to change their life. Tell us a bit**



#### **about the song.**

M: I don't want to say who it is about because it is not nice to sing about anyone, but I felt someone who was close to me was making the wrong decisions. Anytime you tried to help out with something it didn't go very well.

#### **Can you tell me about the cover art of the first pressing of the "More Reality" 12"?**

M: This was an idea that Matt and I had for the CHOICE originally. We wanted to make a generic DJ sleeve with a sticker on it. The plan was that we were going to make a nod to *Montreco Records*. You know how they did the VILETONES 12". It was a generic company sleeve. So this one has *Slasher Records* on it and all the photos are of bands on the label. So that is the connection to it. And the plan was for future releases to personalize the sticker that was to go on the cover.

#### **You did a different cover for a European pressing. Where did the artwork from that come from?**

M: In the summer we were trying to get something sorted out. Matt and I went to the Toronto reference library and we went through the history section looking through books. Matt had a camera with him and we tried to get the angles right and lay this book out as flat because it was a super thick book and it is curved and he took a photo of the picture and brought it home and did what he could to make it look alright and that's how it got on the cover.

#### **Yeah because it would be impossible to take those books out.**

M: Yeah and he wasn't really into the idea of me tearing it out.

#### **Probably not. It still looks great. There is an awesome picture on the back cover. Where is that show from?**

M: That is the Adrift clubhouse, which wasn't around very long.

#### **What show was that for?**

M: CAREER SUICIDE in January of 2009 and I posted on a message board for pictures of URBAN BLIGHT and someone had this lo res picture they had taken so I got Matt to blow it up and do a dot pattern on it so it doesn't

look quite as bad and did what he could to make it passible.

#### **It turned out amazing.**

M: It is as close as you can get to a band shot. It has everyone except for Jason. And it makes us look like we are the biggest band in the world. There is all these people there and they are singing along.

#### **So unlike "Get a Clue" this song "What can be Done" expresses the treadmill of the reality of life, right? It is almost about the futility of living. In some ways it just makes me want to give up. It is a great song because people can identify with it.**

M: It is something when we play live that people respond to.

#### **It doesn't gloss over the bullshit of everyday living. "Total War", the ep, comes out a year later. It just came out really.**

M: It just came out. We got to London for our tour in August on the Saturday and it came out on the Friday.

#### **And it was recorded in April.**

M: With Jonah he would record and then he would go away and then we would go back and do more and so it was never something we did in one shot.

#### **Where does the name "Total War" come from?**

M: I just thought it sounded cool. It is another one of those things where the record had no plan to be called "Total War", but that was the song on the record. Matt saw it and liked the idea.

#### **The songs on "Total War" have more songs sung from a macro perspective. They are bigger picture type of issues. "Total War", "Social Order", "Absolute Control". What changed that made you write songs more about the bigger picture.**

M: It definitely wasn't a conscious decision. It was nothing I even noticed until you say it now. I was writing songs and that was what was effecting me at the time.

#### **What is the song "Total War" about?**

M: Metal bands have these fantasy songs about dungeons and dragons and I have always read history and this is supposed to be from the

perspective of a soldier who is sent away to fight and when you come back you might be alive but your body and mind isn't the same.

#### **Let me ask you about "Social Order". What is that about? I think about Urban Studies and how it has an impact on people's behavior.**

M: "Social Order" is more along the lines of the way I was describing "Break out" before. It is about how everyone is expected to have their place in society and you don't step out of your boundaries. "Social Order" is more about not conforming to that. You might be placed somewhere but that's not the way it should be.

#### **What is the song "Absolute Control" about?**

M: "Absolute Control" is similar from a lyrical standpoint. It is the same thing but worded differently. You got me here.

#### **It can continue to bother you. You are trying to express it in a different way.**

M: "Social Order" is written more as you said from a macro perspective written for everyone, whereas "Absolute Control" is written about personally being controlled. "Social Order" is written about not having to fit in a prescribed way.

#### **We have almost gone through every song that URBAN BLIGHT has ever written. What is your favourite URBAN BLIGHT song from a lyrical standpoint.**

M: I went over this earlier with "Slow Death". I just can't stand cigarette smoke.

#### **What are your thoughts on the Toronto scene at the moment?**

M: I like it. Every few years things change and older people become less involved and younger people take their spot and there is always bands that I like so I can't complain at all. It's great. You have people like Warren over here who inject youth into it. You can't have all these old people who just want to stand around. Now that they are old you have to have some young people flailing their arms and jumping on each other to keep things lively.

#### **Have you ever thought of doing a show with IN TIME?**

M: I am pretty sure we have played with IN TIME before.

#### **I was thinking that recently they just did that "Daily Commute" LP and it is loaded with songs about public transit and I was thinking it would be a great idea for you guys to team up and do something about civic engagement. You both have songs along those lines. Just a thought. What are the band's plans for the next little while?**

M: We have been asked to play some shows in the U.S. When we went to the UK we went the legit route because it is very easy, but now all our passports have stamps that say work visa URBAN BLIGHT so we are trying to figure out how we can get over the border nice and easy.



# reviews

## Abduktio LP

ABDUKTIO have been around for 12 years now, but this was the first I have heard from them. Talk about living under a rock. This new record uses the BAD BRAINS cover for "Rock For Light" with the lightening bolt hitting a TV station transmitter in Tampere, which is where these cats are from. And it is fitting given that one of the highlights on this record is the band's re-make of "Banned in DC" done about a town in Finland. There is a story behind that song, just like the original. The band also covers the DESCENDENTS "Kabuki Girl", which is a great song to cover and one I have never heard done before demonstrating the band's knowledge of early American hardcore. I understand this is one of the band's influences given they do a set of DESCENDENTS material under the name of MR. BUTTFUCKS. The song that follows it up "Griller" is a MINOR THREAT inspired ripper. And the song after that is almost like a ABURADAKO song. The influences are wide and many or maybe these guys just have a way of bringing something new to the fold. Sometimes these guys plod away then crush you. Other times they harmonize while playing super fast. This is worth your attention. (Combat Rock Industries – Vaasankatu 7 / 00500 Helsinki / Finland / [www.fireinsidemusic.com/cr/](http://www.fireinsidemusic.com/cr/))



## Breakfast "3rd & Army" LP

BREAKFAST have done a number of releases but never a full length that I know of. These guys are skaters and remind me a lot of RAZOR's EDGE as a result of. "No Skate No Thrash". BREAKFAST have their own skate anthems in songs like "Ollie". And the singer is known for performing with his skateboard on stage. But BREAKFAST play at break neck paces rivaling bands like EXCLAIM in the speed department. Side B has more experimental arrangements. I wonder if it isn't their side of the "El Burrito's Skate Amigos" release, but with titles this time. (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))



## Charm / U.G. Man "Some Secret" LP

I think this is the last of CHARM's material. They were considered part of the Tokyo fastcore scene, but they were out there with a stand up bass player and space noises. This is a culmination of all the insanity that CHARM were known to bring together. This split is done with a band called U.G. MAN, who sound almost as crazy with many vocalists on the opening track. The band featured ex-members of a little known band from Sappora called SPITFIRE. This came out in April 2006, but was recently repressed. (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com) // Wajlemac)



## Gaz-66 Intrusion "Power Without Violence / Death Tomorrow" ep

This band is from the Ukraine. The ep is a collection of two different recordings. The "Power without violence" side is from 2010 and is more lo fi and has less songs. The Death Tomorrow side was recorded in 2009 and the production sounds much bigger. I like the reverse in direction in terms of sound they are taking. Sop what do GAZ-66 INTRUSION sound like? Blastbeat madness along the lines of INSECT WARFARE. (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))



## Get Destroyed "Shut In" ep

GET DESTROYED hail from Pheonix, Arizona. Hippycore zine used to

run out of here and bands like DESECRATION came from here. But I don't know of a scene since. This came out a few years ago and was the band's third release, so obviously there are signs of life in a scene around here. And I understand the band doesn't play out that often because they all live in different states now. But they are working on a new album so hopefully it will follow the same CROSSED OUT / INFEST lead it has taken here. And the singer from LANDMINE MARATHON does some vocals on here. There is lots of blast beat shredding and torturous slow-core combined in a truly jaw dropping sort of way. (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com) // Give Praise - <http://givepraiserecords.com> // To Live a Lie - [www.tolivealie.com](http://www.tolivealie.com) // Regurgitated Semen)

## Insect Warfare LP

This is the last release by INSECT WARFARE. It is a grind assault in the vein of ANAL CUNT in the way that there are drums stick count ins every ten or fifteen seconds. It looks like there are only two songs on the one side, but the stops and starts make it seem like they are challenging for the most amount of songs on a record title. Did I mention this is a one sided 12". (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))



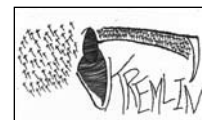
## Internal Rot ep

INTERNAL ROT features former members of AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE and ROSKOPP. There is a speed and wrecklessness brought to this recording from the band's previous projects. But there is also an appreciation for the bands of this genre like NAPLAM DEATH, TERRORIZER, CARCASS, SORE THROAT and FEAR OF GOD that make sense of this avalanche of beats combined with death metal vocals. (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))



## Kremlin demo

KREMLIN are a new band from Toronto. They are a three piece featuring ex-members of MOLESTED YOUTH and the drummer from the SCHOOL JERKS. The band plays mean sounding repetitive riffage a la BLACK FLAG meets the ADOLESCENTS. The emphasis is on scrappy in terms of keeping it together but this wreckless factor gives a little of the early California hardcore sound a la CIRCLE JERKS. The distinguishing factor about this band is the distant and echo sounding vocals, which bring a TERVEET KADET flavour to the mix. It is haunting and gives the band an x-factor with regards to their punk beat. This is my favourite band to come out of the city since the REPROBATES. For copies of the demo write the Ivan Roberts-Davies at [ivanrobertsdavis@yahoo.ca](mailto:ivanrobertsdavis@yahoo.ca).



## Kurwa Aparata "Armed Chemicals of Untame Thoughts" LP

This band just called it quits in February, but they were around for 10 years. I think this was an unintentional swansong release. Despite what the Finnish name might suggest the band was actually from Vienna, Austria. They loved that Brazilian / Finnish partnership in terms of inspiration in their sound. In fact they played with bands like R.D.P. and SICK TERROR. They were certainly inspired by the faster sound, but there is some metal references throughout. Think SLAYER meets TERVEET KADET and the sound starts coming together for KURWA APARATA. Half is this was recorded in Warsaw and the other half in Vienna so this is the product of two different recordings.



### Lama LP

This is a re-issue of an LP released originally in 1983 on *Johanna Records*. This period is considered the heyday of Finnish hardcore and LAMA are considered one of their leaders, making this possibly one of the most important hardcore records to come out of Finland. *Svart* has made it available again. LAMA started out in 1978 and broke up in 1983. This LP has some of the best FINNISH punk songs ever written on it, which are "Tanaan Kotana" and "Taivastia". The band has a punk beat but it is sped up a lot more. It reminds me of a more guttural version of ASTA KASK or APPENDIX but with more intricacies. (Svart Records – <http://www.svartrecords.com>)



### Love Songs "All Branches No Trunk" CD

This is a band that Craigums from WHAT HAPPENS NEXT had going. They remind me of part MR. T EXPERIENCE meets HICKEY meets PAUL YESTER, which is a one man band project that Paul Morris from SONS OF ISHMAEL did which was very well done and very humorous. Like PAUL YESTER, LOVE SONGS started out as a one man band project. But his second CD actually has a band backing it. The humour is throughout this with songs like "There's No L in Fool, Foo". Or what of the re-make of the song "To all the girls I've ever thought about loving before". Think Weird Al in a punk rock form. (New Disorder – [www.newdisorder.com](http://www.newdisorder.com) // 625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))



### Slight Slappers "Ashita hi wa mata nobori masuka?" LP

SLIGHT SLAPPERS have been around for 16 years playing an intense style of hardcore that can only be associated with power violence, just given how fast they can play. It doesn't sound like any particular style of power violence that has come before. This is just intense and an assault on the ears. The record translates to "Will the sun shine on me again tomorrow?" and represents the second full length and a return to form for the band. There is some circus like moments like the PISSED HAPPY CHILDREN full length found in the song "The ocean, August and blue memories". You have the blazing fast songs like "Rasen". There is the twisted NOMEANSNO style found in the title track. SLIGHT SLAPPERS are versatile while still forging out a new sound. (HG Fact – 105 Nakeneah Inbach 1-M / 2-7-15 Yayol-cho / Nakano, Tokyo / 154-0013 / Japan // 625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))



### Society of Friends CD

This is BORN AGAINST on acid and speed simultaneously. (625 Productions – [www.625thrash.com](http://www.625thrash.com))

### Sokea Piste "Ajatus Karkaa" 12"

SOKEA PISTE are a new band from Tampere formed out of members of KYKLOPIEN SUKKUPPUTTO, MANIFESTO JUKEBOX, VIRKAVALTA and AORTAORTA. My initial impression is that SOKEA PISTE are much slower and less frenetic than KYKLOPIEN SUKKUPPUTTO. MANIFESTO JUKEBOX struck me as a band with a lot of melody and SOKEA PISTE have taken those structures slowed them down and made them noisier. It is a bit like listening to JOY DIVISION if JOY DIVISION played guitars and listened to later period BLACK FLAG and "N.Y.T." by TERVEET KADET off the "Russia Bombs Finland" comp. The idea behind the band is to provide a soundtrack for the collapse of the capitalist system. I'm not putting my hope in that, but it does come close to the



idea behind DOUBLE NEGATIVE in putting together expressions of rage, paranoia, and disgust. This is a huge departure from their previous outings, but an impactful one. Finland continues to surprise. (Kamaset Levyt – [www.punkinfinland.net/kamaset](http://www.punkinfinland.net/kamaset) // Tuska & Ahidistus – [www.elisamet.fi/tuskajaahdistus](http://www.elisamet.fi/tuskajaahdistus))

### Total War demo

West coast crust assault being played by guys who have played in FEAR OF TOMORROW, LIMB FROM LIMB, MASS GRAVE, and UNLEARN. This is probably the latest bastard child to result from Vancouver's great Distort fest. Once the opening track wakes up the songs take on a charging pace with a constant low end rumble to echo our impending doom. Each song rings into the next creating momentum throughout the entire recording which reminds me of bands like DISKELMA. The guitar sound on songs like "They Lead, We Follow" there is a hum that reminds me of bands like LEGION666 or BOMBSTRIKE. Foat's vocals straddle harsh and throaty in a WOLRD BURNS TO DEATH manner. And songs like "Nuclear Meltdown Hysteria" are relevant given the recent events in Fukushima. Download the demo at [www.mediafire.com/%2F%3Fbugihd38z9u7h6h&h=VAQDdwVVN](http://www.mediafire.com/%2F%3Fbugihd38z9u7h6h&h=VAQDdwVVN)



### Tuhkaus ep

This is the follow up to "Maailma Paattyy Tuhkaan" demo which came out last year. Eight new songs pressed on an ep. TUHKAUS were a side project band formed by the drummer of BRUTOPIA and the singer from NOITUUS. The drummer lives in Oulu, Finland, which is a coastal community up the Gulf of Bothnia. The singer is from Turku, which is closer to Helsinki. There is some long distance commuting going on here to make this work. The vocals remind me of NATIONS ON FIRE. The music compiles a variety of styles and sound collages. There are news clips in Finnish with air raid sirens blended into a hybrid of sounds. The guitars have screaming solos that remind me of Japacore. The songs are short along the lines of classic Fin-core length. But the music is more along the lines of modern d-beat to what bands like TO WHAT END and MASSMORD play without the long drawn out epic-ness to the songs. (Roku Records - Ville Vuorjoki / Kemintle 1488 / 97130 Hirvas / Finland // Psychedelica Records • c/o Jäämeri Tuotanto Ky / Meistamo • Koulukatu 3 A 6 • 90100 Oulu / Finland / [www.psychedelica.fi/psychedelica.html](http://www.psychedelica.fi/psychedelica.html))



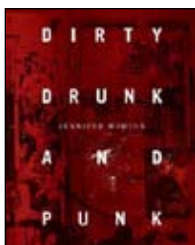
### Vivisektio "1984" LP

VIVISEKTIO were a hardcore band from a small town in Lapland called Akaslompola, which is 130 km north of the Arctic Circle. Back in 1983 that made them one of the world's most northermost hardcore bands. But they were a band of near firsts. They also had two girls in the band when it wasn't common. They were an anarcho punk band from Finland drawing influences from KAAOS, LAMA, RATTUS, W.D.M., TERVEET KADET, CRASS, FLUX OF PINK INDIANS, AMEBIX, DIATRIBE. Given that the band was never able to get any good recordings together between 1983 and 1986, the guitarist and bassist teamed up with the drummer from TOTUUS and the singer from JATESAHA to record these old songs. It is great to hear what we have been missing for so many years from a remote region in Finland. *Hohnie Records* has a great bio up of the band complete with photos at <http://www.hoehnie-records.de/presse/vivisektio.htm>. Just a crucial modern day reconstruction of a classic part of Finland's hardcore past. (Höhnle Records - An der Kuhtränke 7 / 31535 Neustadt / Germany / [www.hoehnie-records.de](http://www.hoehnie-records.de) // Roku Records - Ville Vuorjoki / Kemintle 1488 / 97130 Hirvas / Finland)





**“Dirty Drunk and Punk”** by Jennifer Morton  
This is the story about BFG. BUNCHO FUCKING GOOFS. One of the most notorious and easily the most well known hardcore band in Toronto. If you ask anyone from the Toronto hardcore scene about the Goofs they will have more than a story to share. And not just a story but usually an out there story of some crazy shit that went down or some heroic gesture. Maybe an overarching thank you for this band of punks that has done so much for this scene.



These guys were unlike any other band based solely on their commitment to the scene or their tireless ability to keep the party going. This group of punk rock misfits are known for quite a few things within the city and outside in the world of punk rock lore. And there is a good chance that what you heard was true. Jennifer Morton finally pulled together 25 years of punk insanity to tell a story that so many of us only know bits and pieces to and what better person to do it. Jennifer got her introduction to the Goofs through a local tv show that covered the music scene like none other. I am talking about a show called “The New Music”. This show did rock journalism and it started out at the same time that punk rock did. Consequently, the New Music covered a lot of punk things that were happening in Toronto. And I’m not talking the sensational stories that the CBC or CTV did. I’m talking going down to basement clubs and capturing ANTI-PASTI destroy a club or crowd interviews just after the Dead Kennedys finished playing at the Masonic Temple. This is the kind of show that should have informed how to do music programs on Much Music and MTV, but with cost cutting infatuations video stations cut their news like programming from video channels. If video killed the radio star, accountants killed the video show. Thankfully Jennifer was schooled in this earlier journalism period and has the ability to tell a story and capture it and even tell it in the voice that is telling it. This is particularly good for BFG because there was so many stories to tell. And many have tried to tell their story. There is 25 years of stories and I am talking of the “Live Fast, Die Young” kind. That starts out with the fact that this bicycle gang started the band on a dare. They opened up for UNITED STATE and were filmed for a documentary on the hardcore scene called “Not Dead Yet”. This was all within the band’s first week of existence. The band had a lot of fun. They didn’t take themselves too seriously but Kirk’s drum set suggested otherwise. The music was scrappy enough to seem easy to do and yet in going through the lyrics there are some serious and hard lived lessons that stand behind them. BFG’s music suggested you could get up and do your own band and within a few years the first of the goof bands were forming. Soon the Fort started up, which functioned as an after hours party space. The place was primarily a shelter for the band, but before you knew it became the drop in space to go to before and after the show. Many punks would crash their overnight. And then the skinheads started getting out of hand. Well the Goofs handled them. Jennifer gets into the various cautionary measures the Goofs developed like the electrified stairwell. But essentially the Goofs beat the skins out of the scene and Toronto was better for it. In hindsight I remember going to shows in Buffalo and Detroit and even Hamilton and having the shows get ruined because of skinheads. I thought it was fucked but I didn’t make the connection that Toronto’s hardcore scene flourished as a result of not having skinheads around and yet I believe that to be true these days. That’s enough of a legacy right there to hang a hat on. But the Goofs were a restless and innovative bunch. In 1985, the Goofs take over an old R ‘n B Club and opened up the first punk run hardcore club called the DMZ. Sure the DIODES borrowed an arts space in 1977 and had weekend shows for six consecutive weeks. But the Goofs booked a club for almost an entire year and we are talking 7 days a week. Some great shows happened here like 7 SECONDS and BATTALION OF SAINTS, the FREEZE and 76% UNCERTAIN, the RHYTHM PIGS and VAMPIRE LESBOS, the ENIGMAS and NOMEANSNO. It was an insane schedule. It was an incredible space. It has always been and will always remain my favourite place to see a show. Unfortunately it didn’t last but the Goofs tried to start up a second DMZ, however that didn’t really get too far. Jennifer gets all the trails and tribulations together. One of the next things to happen is Sean comes along with some inheritance money. He buys recording equipment and *Back Alley Records* is born. There are loads of stories in here. Bambi, the band’s original guitarist, was gorgeous and a great laugh. Bits of her story are

told here. Godzilla, Mad Dog, Dirt, Mucus, the Greeks, Cisco, King Kong, Mike Anus, Mr. T and many others intertwined their stories. And to pull this off Jennifer employs a cut and paste design which takes quotes and pictures and narrative and brings them all together under the various story lines. And although it is cut and paste the book doesn’t look like a zine. It is a carefully thought out art book that employs every punk aesthetic thought of. Like Jello, Steve ran for office. He is truly one of a kind and the Goofs have given us 25 years of how to do it yourself living. Toronto hardcore is all better for it. There was a reason why Tim Yohannon became obsessed with learning about BFG, why the DAYGLOS looked up to them, why so many kids tried to emulate them. The band that started out like a joke lived the way most punks talk about living and they did that for decades. And they made it one hell of a good time. (Insomniac Press - [www.dirtydrunkandpunk.com](http://www.dirtydrunkandpunk.com))

#### **“Songs from Nowhere” by Nico Taus**

“Songs from Nowhere” are the reflections of the Sudbury hardcore scene that these kids helped build. The book is written by Nico who was the singer of VICIOUS CYCLE. VICIOUS CYCLE were one of my favourite band’s from Sudbury and they were around between 2005 – 2010. But Sudbury has it’s challenges. It is a bit of a shithole. The city is remote and north and is best known as a mining town. The big mine is nickel making the place better known as the Big Nickel. It is the kind of town you escape from. But it is a university town and as a result there is a small punk scene there that has been particularly great over the last few years and has included bands like the STATUES and UV RAYS. This book of Nico’s tries to chronicle the events of the scene over the last few years using VICIOUS CYCLE as the narration point. He starts with the band’s prior band PROVEN and gets into how the band changed members, recorded their different releases and got out on the road. Some of the story line has gaping holes. Some of his writing can be characterized as rapid fire recollections. The book is full of highlights but falls down with providing the back story. I would have loved to know more about how bands came about. The fights and conflicts. More of the stories behind some of the bigger shows. I hoped that “Songs from Nowhere” was going to be more like “Banned in DC”, which is the ultimate book for telling a scene’s stories. I feel the history of this era could have benefitted from other perspectives. If Nico had done some interviews and included those in here this book would have had a more well rounded perspective. It is the diary style that fails in telling Sudbury’s story I have done interviews with a few of these, so I know first hand that they have great stories to tell. Regardless, “Songs from Nowhere” is a book worthy of your attention just to learn about how these bands know each other and interacted. There are great photos and loads of flyers that I have never seen before. And indirectly the book makes the argument that smaller towns produce great bands and incredible scenes. Over the years I have seen this to be true. Think of the scenes in Hamilton, Victoria or St. John’s to prove this point. (<http://songsfromnowhere.com/>)



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